

Le Bulletin/Newsletter

VOL 10 • NO. 1 • INSTITUT SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR INSTITUTE • 1990

UNIVERSITE CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY



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Institut Simone de Beauvoir Institute
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Le Bulletin encourage la soumission d'articles, d'annonces, ainsi que de tout autre texte qui respecte le fait féminin et/ou féministe. Les textes seront écrits en français ou en anglais et dactylographiés à double interligne. De préférence, faites-nous parvenir votre texte enregistré sur disquette à l'aide des logiciels WordStar ou WordPerfect. Les dessins, les bandes dessinées ou les graphiques seront en noir et blanc.

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\$12.00 Institution/institution 12\$

\$8.00 Individual/régulier 8\$

\$5.00 Student/étudiant 5\$

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Sisters, we remember you

We dedicate this issue of the *Bulletin/Newsletter* to our sisters:

Mes soeurs, nous nous souvenons de vous

Nous dédions ce numéro du *Bulletin/Newsletter* à nos soeurs:

Geneviève Bergeron

Maryse Laganière

Hélène Colgan

Maryse Leclair

Nathalie Croteau

Anne-Marie Lemay

Barbara Daigneault

Sonia Pelletier

Anne-Marie Edward

Michèle Richard

Maud Haviernick

Annie Saint-Arneault

Barbara Maria Klueznick

Annie Turcotte

École Polytechnique de Montréal

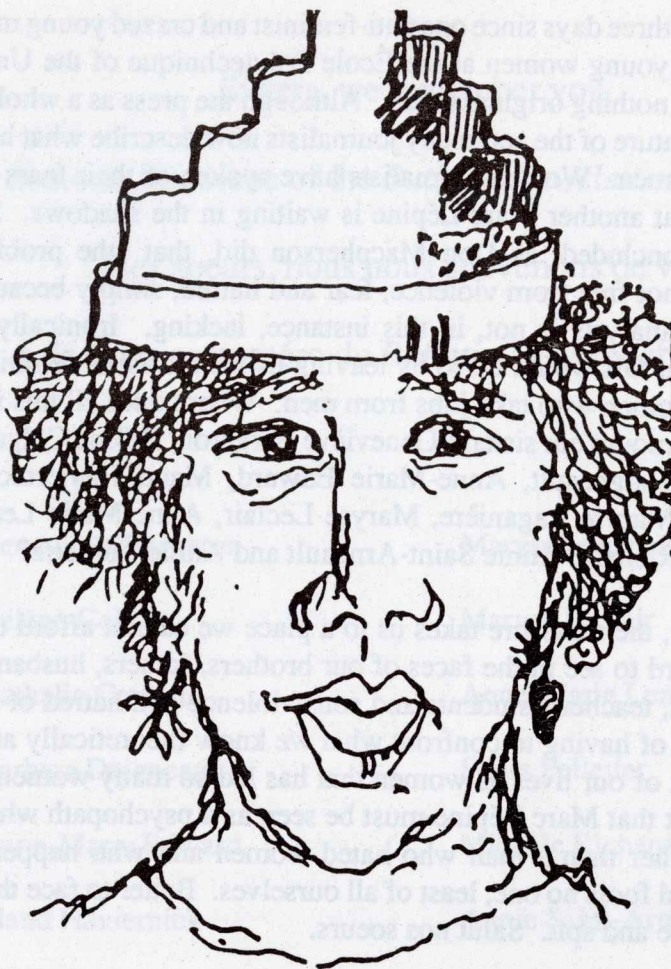
6 décembre 1989

It has now been three days since one anti-feminist and crazed young man brutally murdered fourteen young women at the École Polytechnique of the Université de Montréal. There is nothing original to say. Although the press as a whole was slow to understand the nature of the act, many journalists now describe what happened as a crime against women. Women journalists have spoken of their fears as women, notably the fear that another Marc Lépine is waiting in the shadows. Some male journalists have concluded, as Don Macpherson did, that "the problem is that one-half of us are not free from violence, fear and hatred, simply because of sex." Feminist political analysis is not, in this instance, lacking. Ironically, the killer himself assured that this would be so by leaving us his hit list of feminists and his last words about women who take jobs from men. Where does all this insight take us, those of us who mourn our sisters: Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Maria Klueznick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie Saint-Arneault and Annie Turcotte?

For some of us, the massacre takes us to a place we cannot afford to go. Who among us can afford to see in the faces of our brothers, fathers, husbands, friends, bosses, neighbours, teachers, students and sons violence and hatred of women? It is perhaps the fear of having to confront what we know theoretically and what we live every moment of our lives as women that has led so many women, and many more men, to insist that Marc Lépine must be seen as a psychopath who happened to hate women rather than a man who hated women and who happened to be a psychopath. Denial fools no one, least of all ourselves. Better to face the fear, look it straight in the eye and spit. Salut nos sœurs.

Montreal, December 8, 1989

Sherene Razack



Hannah

DYANA WERDEN 189

Rose Sheinin Talks to Marianne Ainley

Ainley: Dr. Sheinin, why did you come to Concordia University?

Sheinin: I came to Concordia because I think that Concordia is a University in Canada which is just moving into its autocatalytic phase. I thought that I could contribute a great deal to academic development at Concordia. I also want to continue working to change the academic world for women. At the present time, one must be a part of the academic administration in order to effect change from within.

Ainley: The Academic Vice Rector is a very powerful position. How do you see your opportunities as a woman scientist as well as woman administrator?

Sheinin: My own hard science laboratory will close. That phase of my life will essentially be completed at the end of this academic year. To celebrate I will have a "lab cooling" just as I had a "lab warming" when it opened. I've worked very hard on behalf of women in science and, without wishing to seem arrogant in any way, other women scientists have to take on this cause. They really must begin to understand what the position of women in science is, what the position of men in science is, and that women scientists have got to start working collectively to change the place of women in this arena. I intend to continue the research that I started on the history and culture of women in science and, most important, a study of current science policy in Canada and what that means in the absence of women. There are lots of people who could do the kind of scientific work I was doing, if they are willing to work hard and use their heads and hands. I don't think there are too many people that can do the studies on women and science policy. The fact that I can do it has to do with maturing; my own maturing in understanding the position of women in science and what has to be done to change that. So that's what I'm going to do.

Ainley: The Simone de Beauvoir Institute is very excited about having you here because of our anomalous position in the University. We do not have a tenure track position at the Institute, only visiting professors. So we cannot have continuity in policy, or teaching.

Sheinin: When you asked me why I came to Concordia, I forgot to say that one of the reasons was the Simone de Beauvoir Institute. I've realized as I've moved around the world that women in science, women doing feminist research throughout the world, know the Simone de Beauvoir Institute in Canada. It really does behoove Concordia to ensure the survival of the Institute and to see that it matures in such a way that it really is, once again, the premier research institute on and for women in Canada.

Ainley: Yes, we are a historic institution; but without funds we cannot go on. We should really have a graduate programme to train researchers, not just in women and science, but in all areas of feminist research. I know that your commitment to feminist issues is extremely strong. For instance, I know that you initiated an inquiry as to why there were so few women scientists in the Royal Society of Canada. And lo and behold, this year nine women scientists were elected Fellows, thanks to you.

Sheinin: Well, you know I certainly can take full credit for nagging everybody in this country about the role of women in the Royal Society of Canada. However, the most recent initiative must be attributed to Dr. Digby McLaren, current president of the RSC. The Royal Society's initiative is very interesting. It was a joint initiative of the Ministry of State for Science and Technology and Dr. McLaren. I am extremely grateful, not only on my behalf, but on behalf of all the women scientists in Canada. The outcome is a powerful document (which anyone can obtain from the office of the Royal Society of Canada) and a standing committee on Women in Scholarship. There was a really profound commitment on the part of a number of people in the Society's nomination process people who really understand that the Royal Society of Canada has not been cognizant of the contribution of women. In addition, the Society has been viewed as an all male, white, more than middle class bastion, and this is not a good image to project if we are looking forward to the future. It is very important to have women in the RSC. It's important to the Society, it's important to women; it's important to science and technology in Canada.

Ainley: I couldn't agree with you more! How do you assess the situation of women scientists at Concordia? Have you had the chance to become familiar with what's happening in Concordia?

Sheinin: No, I really haven't yet. I was fortunate to attend the first women's caucus. I was extremely impressed, first of all, by the depth of the individuals that participated and the breadth of the disciplines. So I'm very optimistic. When I began to think about coming to Concordia, I inquired about whether there was a branch of the Canadian Association for Women in Science (CAWIS) here, and the answer is that there isn't one anywhere in Quebec. I think this is a very important issue, too. I am particularly anxious to have a unit of CAWIS here in Quebec.

Ainley: Yes, we've been considering establishing a local chapter for a while. Professor Mary Baldwin and I used to be the only Quebec members of this organisation.

Sheinin: I think we can do it. There are lots of women scientists at Concordia, at McGill, at the Université de Montréal, and at UQAM. It will be really terrific to get together and start a chapter of CAWIS in Quebec, with all its English- and French-speaking women scientists. By its mandate, CAWIS invites anyone who is interested in women in science to participate. So I hope that we can interest teachers at all levels (including CEGEPS), women in industry, and even men. So any men who wish to join us, my pleasure.

Ainley: Have you considered becoming a Fellow of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute?

Sheinin: That's very kind of you. I'm certainly interested, but I'm not sure how much I can contribute at this particular time, because I'm just going step by step, learning about Concordia. And there's lots to learn. All I can say is that I would certainly like that for the future. If the Institute will accept a non-functioning Fellow, that's fine too. But I can't at the moment see my way clear to active participation.

Ainley: You expressed interest in participating in the activities of the Institute.

Sheinin: Oh yes, I'm already doing that. I was very pleased to be able to hear Madam Gudmundsdottir, the representative from the Women's Alliance in Iceland. It was extraordinary. I'm on the mailing list, thanks to you, and I will come whenever I can.

Ainley: Do you plan any involvement with the Science College? Women are taking science there; but they have a history of science course that, I'm quite convinced, does not include women in science or even Canadian science.

Sheinin: I can't really speak about the Science College. I did express a great deal of interest before I arrived. But I didn't understand exactly what the Science College is. Aside from my family and everything that goes with that, and my work, I have only two priorities in my life, peace and women. What I had really hoped to see, and what I would really like to see for myself, is a course or programme which deals with Science Policy in a broad perspective, including women. You cannot have an effective, top flight Science Policy unless someone is thinking about women. So, the other part of that is understanding that science policy is being made all the time in this country, but in the absence of scientists, and in the absence of the university, let alone women! This is absurd. Most of us do not understand the problems, because there is little open discussion of the issues in the public domain. The politicians don't understand, scientists don't understand. We scientists really think that we can contribute to Science Policy. There is no way that we are allowed to! Politicians, industry and other structures in society do! So that's the kind of contribution I want to make now.

"Wrong Rights": Feminism Applied To Law

Sherene Razack

In an article entitled "Wrong Rights," Elizabeth Wolgast offers the following argument: "Rights work where people are in a position to press for them; for others they give only the caricature of justice." In the past decade, in one way or another, the language of rights has been central to the work I did for pay. I spent most of my time as a human rights educator trying to dress the daily realities of oppression in the language of rights, aware that the exercise reduced that experience profoundly, but believing that rights were something worth having. I worked from the premise that there could be no rights without means, as Wolgast clearly does in her article. Social change was all about getting the means (power) to insist that one's rights claims be honoured. It did not occur to me then that my experience, and that of other women and minorities, might never be fully accommodated within a rights framework.

Rights Thinking

To put it simply, rights are claims for a certain kind of treatment. My claim to be treated equally when applying for a job, for instance, is not, however, as straightforward a request as my simple definition implies. For what if my claim conflicts with your claim (as an employer) to hire whomsoever you choose? Whose claim shall be honoured? In the tradition of the enlightenment, and in keeping with the principles upon which Western law is based, both competing claims have to be weighed in reference to the principle that each individual is entitled to equal consideration. That is to say, neither my claim nor the employer's will be assumed at the start to have priority; each will be assessed in terms of a second, equally important principle, that each individual shall enjoy the maximum in personal freedom to pursue his or her own interests. If we adopt a rights-based line of

thinking, our pre-eminent concern is autonomy, defined as the freedom to do as one pleases. From the lofty heights of equal consideration and maximum individual freedom, we are obliged to descend into the concrete realities of who is going to get his or her own way. Will my right to equality triumph over the employer's right to hire whomsoever he pleases (use of the masculine pronoun is intentional)? Rights-influenced thinkers suggest that the only way out is to honour the claim that inflicts the least harm, by which is meant the claim that least interferes with personal freedom. Honouring the employer's claim will seriously harm me; specifically, I will be denied a job, and perhaps my freedom to eat. On the other hand, honouring my claim restricts the employer's freedom, but not in any life-threatening way. No contest, then; a victor emerges.

The lessons to be drawn from my illustration of rights-based thinking are not overly profound; indeed they are what we call common sense. First, the potential difficulties of actually putting this "conflict-resolution" model into practice are legend. What is equal consideration? The model seems to imply that the employer and I start off in principle as equal and autonomous human beings, hence each entitled to equal consideration. Here is where the suspicion is born that my "experience" is not likely to be squeezed into this framework. The employer and I are not equal, and to pretend that we are is to give him an advantage in a situation where he already holds all the cards. Secondly, neither of us actually functions as autonomous individuals: he derives benefit from his membership in a certain group, whereas I suffer disadvantage as a result of my own group characteristics. This reality flies in the face of rights-based concern for the autonomy of the individual and ultimately begs the question why should autonomy only mean individual freedom from interference by another. Finally, the claims-balancing process wears a deceptive mantle of reason. It presumes that some neutral judge will be able to weigh the competing claims, albeit in reference to the guiding principles; that he will be able to appreciate harm in each instance; that he does not have to think his way out of my problematic past and present reality or the employer's, except to choose a side.

It is possible to spend a long time complaining about the inadequacies of rights-based thinking. And I confess immediately that it is one of my favourite activities. It can be a fascinating game of abstraction. A more profitable pursuit, however, is pinning down what to do about a situation where my rights claims, and those of other women and minorities, are systematically denied. In other words, what do I do about unemployment, low pay, violence against women and children, etc.

Playing the rights game more cleverly will not change the situation in which women and minorities find themselves because the full story of their lives, the details that might enable a neutral judge (assuming one can be found) to properly assess the competing claims, are not admissible as evidence, as lawyers are wont to put it. The judge has to know, for instance, that who I am and the situation in which I find myself have something to do with my sex and race, among other things. Perhaps more important, who the employer is and the situation in which he finds himself have something to do with his sex and race, among other things. If the judge begins to see us both in the context of our group situations, then the goal of individual personal freedom takes on a new meaning. Freedom and autonomy for me will mean the freedom not to be constrained by someone's foot on my neck, as Sojourner Truth put it so long ago.

Beyond Rights

Tackling only the first layer of my rights dilemma, clearly what I have to do is to get the judge to see oppression and to recognize, again as lawyers say, that it is a material fact in the case. This is what feminists do in courts of law. One can be pretty creative about wrong rights. One can start talking about group rights although, sooner or later, someone is going to tell the story about a black man competing with a white woman and a disabled First Nations woman for the same job, and the story teller will wait smugly for you to throw up your hands in despair. One can try to have a woman (preferably minority but that is asking for the sky) as the judge. One might also demonstrate the old adage that there is more than one way to skin a cat,

introducing in a thousand different ways concrete "facts" about oppression that have a bearing on the conflict at hand. Sometimes this works quite well.

There are, however, limits to one's creativity in court. The judge likes "facts," to be empirically provable bits of your life. If, for instance, what is at issue is your right as a woman to be warned about a rapist whom the police know is likely to strike in your neighbourhood (a current case in Toronto), you must prove that all women (not only you) feel a knot of fear in their guts when they come home late at night and must walk down a dark street. Don't be surprised, however, when the prosecutor pulls out of his briefcase proof to the contrary. It is not hard to find brave women who feel no knots. It is even easier to find women who will not tell you about their fear because they have suppressed it, or because to tell about it is to name a thing better left unsaid.

In the final analysis, what pushes us as women to twist and pull at the rights framework until it admits our reality in all its complexity is the urgent need to name: to bring out into the harsh light of day the violence that invades the beds, the streets and the workplaces of women's lives. Naming is a dangerous game. Oppression comes with oppressors, for one. For another, we have to watch how we do the naming. White, middle-class, heterosexual and able-bodied women, who have thus far been our voice in the courtroom and in the journals of academe, cannot speak with authority of all facets of our lives. Finally, naming is not the kind of thing that can be done in whispers. We have to take on the tasks of self-description collectively, watching out for the insidious ways in which rights thinking, racism and male domination have colonized our minds and turned our attention away from the real.

It may be that as we travel past the horror of naming oppression in the courtroom, we are better able to think about why a court of law is not the best place to explore visions for change. In the meantime, however, the courtroom is where rights-thinking show-downs have been happening. The right to choice is only one such battle. As I write this, the Mulroney government has tabled a new abortion law. In this instance, as in so many others, it is necessary to have the power to press one's rights claims. We may choose as strategy to avoid a legal playing field altogether, turning

our attention to organizing our power, but the thinking that inspires those who would deny women control over their bodies relies heavily on the language of rights. It is from rights-thinking that we get that curious abstraction of the fetus without a womb. Sooner or later, we have to expose rights-based perspectives, dressed as they usually are in abstractions, for what they are: a poorly disguised way of preserving things just as they are.



The Patriarchal Primal Scene

Elsa Schieder

I've heard many theories about how patriarchy got started. The most popular is that, a few thousand years ago, men figured out their role as inseminators, and presto, felt the urge to control women so they could ensure paternity.

Here's my theory. At some point, women learned to believe men were needed for protection, that women couldn't protect women, that men were somehow more powerful and maybe even wiser. At some point, in other words, women came to believe we couldn't take care of ourselves. That led to a profound shift of consciousness. It wasn't just a matter of acknowledging that women and men did somewhat different activities (with women doing more of the child-care and gathering, and men doing more of the hunting). It was a matter of a change in beliefs about who needs whom for survival, and who is dangerous to whose survival.

I'm not suggesting that women had this change of belief without good reason. I'm sure that many women experienced male violence and were unable to protect themselves or other women. I am, however, dating patriarchy not from the time that men attempted to control individual women or women collectively (whether to ensure paternity or for whatever other reason), but from the time when women, by and large, accepted that women couldn't escape male control—accepted, even, that male dominance was normal and right.

So, if patriarchy ends, I will date it not from the time men cease to have more coercive power than women, but from the time we, by and large, come to believe in our ability, and are able to take care of ourselves.

How does all this tie in with the patriarchal primal scene?

I don't believe that babies are born knowing about patriarchy or male violence. I believe each person has to learn about the status quo, and the point when the lesson sinks in is the patriarchal primal scene.

For a woman, this scene occurs when she concedes first place to a man, puts herself second, gives in intellectually and/or physically, gives up, concedes failure, and stops struggling. For a man, the patriarchal primal scene occurs when he puts himself first, sees himself as better or stronger or more important than women.

Feminist theorist Toril Moi helped spark this understanding of the primal scene. In the spring of 1989, I heard her speak on Simone de Beauvoir. Moi postulated that, for de Beauvoir (and most other women intellectuals), the primal scene is the one in which she declares herself inferior to a man, the scene in which she is bested (or considers herself bested) by a man she considers her superior.

In the Luxembourg gardens, de Beauvoir and Sartre had an intellectual argument; de Beauvoir gave in completely. De Beauvoir created that scene. That is, de Beauvoir was younger by several years, had far less training in philosophy, and during her (significantly fewer) years of study, had shown herself to be a quicker learner than Sartre. Yet in that debate, she conceded first place to Sartre, not just temporarily but permanently, and forever after took second place.

De Beauvoir herself, in *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*, records the slightly different primal scene of a friend. In that case, the woman does not take intellectual, but physical, second place. That woman has always been bold, said what she wanted to say, gone where she wanted to go. Then one night, she narrowly escapes male violence. Thereafter, she is much more timid.

I didn't wonder at this a decade ago when I read the book. I wonder now. Here's a woman who hasn't been threatened in hundreds of encounters, a woman whose outspokenness has been reinforced hundreds of times. Then, once, she is physically threatened. At once, she is transformed into a far more conventional woman.

Now I think of the encounter as a primal scene waiting to happen—because the woman had learned that it was going to happen, and because there were no supports in place to help her get back her nerve. Similarly, de Beauvoir conceded that Sartre was intellectually more powerful, not because he was, but because she had been conditioned to await such an event, and if it did not happen, to make it happen.

Toril Moi asked what made de Beauvoir take second place to Sartre, and what made her change fields and leave her first love, philosophy, to him. My answer is that while women may fight against defeat, we may also want to have the primal/final scene over once and for all. Most women have learned to long for the safety (or so we hope) of being out of the struggle. Further, with good reason, most of us grow up despairing of really being able to protect ourselves and get what we want out of life. If there is hopelessness about these things deep inside, at some point it's very likely to surface.

In other words, the primal scene is really the final straw. That scene occurs because there are earlier scenes in which the woman does not concede defeat but in which she learns that she will be defeated. She may see other women give up hope; she may lack models of women who fight and win; she may be attacked once too often by one or more men; she may not know of women who speak out and aren't ashamed if they're victimized. In the final scene, she takes her proper place in the patriarchal world.

Women intellectuals may frequently face a patriarchal primal scene of the intellect. Almost all women are profoundly affected by "manfear," fear of male violence. We learn that men are physically more powerful, and may use that power against us. At some point, most of us learn we can't protect ourselves. We may also come to believe that a particular man is our intellectual superior. What this means is that, in patriarchy, women are likely to face primal scenes on different levels; the link between the scenes is that, each time, the woman is supposed to be defeated.

Note: to function, patriarchy doesn't need all women or men to have such primal/final scenes. However, there's probably a critical mass needed to keep the status quo going.

In many ways, the feminist movement has aimed to reshift our consciousness. "Women hold up half the sky." "Sisters are doing it for themselves." "Woman-power." The empowerment of women is a major goal of this movement.

The forces that act against women, though we feel them coming from individual men and women, come from a system. It's hard to hold out alone. And, traditionally, that's been the main way women have held out. Yet, as nineteenth century feminist Emily Collins wrote: "When I found I was not alone, how my heart bounded with joy."

What if de Beauvoir had returned home after the debacle in the Luxembourg garden and met with incredulity on the faces of friends. "You've got to be kidding?" "But, Simone, that's just not what women do."

And what if her friend, the one who narrowly escaped violence, had lived in a society in which it was absolutely outrageous for men to be violent to women. What if her friend's sudden timidity had been something of concern to those around her, if there had been support to deal with her fears? What if . . . ?

A woman alone can draw on her own resources, and on the occasional helpful person. At some point, she often drains her own resources: that's patriarchal primal-scene time.

Patriarchy relies partly on women being too caught up in daily activities to see the overall pattern, especially how we're often at a disadvantage. An anti-patriarchal movement helps people to reject the assumption that the everyday is natural and normal, to raise what is often ignored to conscious awareness, and to believe in the possibility of making changes.

Insofar as patriarchy is fuelled by women's fear, an important focus of feminism is "manfear." Insofar as fear is a major block to wholeness, anyone concerned with psychological wholeness needs to deal with the impact of patriarchy.

By reclaiming knowledge about women, about herstory, about women's strengths and capabilities, the women's movement is giving women the potential for wholeness. A whole being is not one who concedes second place. The goal isn't first place. It's just place and space. A safe place.

Barbara Roberts talks at a Cross-Canada Exchange on Lesbian Studies

Barbara Roberts

The following is the edited script of the presentation given by Barbara Roberts, visiting professor at the Simone de Beauvoir Institute, to the Cross-Canada Exchange organized by the Lesbian Studies Coalition of Concordia, in November, 1988.

Speaking partly from the Simone de Beauvoir Institute and partly as about-to-be-from Athabasca University, I want to talk about my experience here and some of the ways that I think Lesbian Studies issues at Concordia and at the Institute can be addressed. But primarily, I want to talk about strategies that might be helpful in increasing Lesbian Studies within Women's Studies in general.

As several of you have said tonight, the parallels are really very striking: Lesbian Studies seems to be in about the same position now as Women's Studies was fifteen years ago. Some of the barriers to the establishment of Lesbian Studies programmes seem to be very similar to the barriers faced in establishing Women's Studies programmes—fifteen years ago, ten years ago, and in some places still today. Some of the resources available for Women's Studies are also available for establishing Lesbian Studies programmes. So, there are possibilities as well as difficulties.

First, I want to situate the Institute in the setting of a big, male-dominated university. Of the tenured faculty at Concordia, six percent are women. Most of the limited term appointees, that is the "easy out" faculty, are women. So most are in an insecure, underpaid, overworked position and have difficulty getting input at the higher levels of power. Even women who are secure, tenured, and highly respected sometimes have difficulty getting input, simply because they are a tiny little group. Even if all of the tenured women faculty at Concordia University decided that their priority for a given year was to establish a solid Lesbian Studies programme, it would

still be very difficult because of the complicated bureaucratic steps involved. Also six percent is not necessarily a large enough number to persuade the majority.

Another complication is that, although the Institute administers a Women's Studies B.A. and a post-graduate certificate programme, we don't have "department" status and are very badly underfunded. Consequently, like most Women's Studies programmes, we do a lot of it on a wing and a prayer with an awful lot of unpaid overtime. I think it's quite miraculous that we manage Women's Studies here as well as we do.

There are, at present, no courses that have Lesbian Studies in the title; but there are several courses that either regularly or sometimes have some Lesbian Studies content, depending on who teaches them.

This brings me to another problem, and I don't know if it's peculiar to the Institute, but we only have one full-time Women's Studies faculty member, always on limited term appointment. The Deans at Concordia would like to replace all limited term appointees with less expensive part-timers, so the chances of us guaranteeing stability in our programme are not very good. And some of our best and brightest, come in (like me) as limited-term appointees, and lo and behold they just don't get renewed. We lost one of our most wonderful feminist faculty members, a lesbian (but I'm not sure if she's out), who was teaching some Women's Studies courses. Another lesbian, part-time faculty member (again I'm not sure if she's out) includes lesbian content as core material in one of her advanced Women's Studies courses. It's well received.

I am moving in that direction. I've been disturbed for some years about the racism and heterosexism in my courses, sins of omission rather than sins of commission, and I've been trying to figure out how to get around that. The strategy that I used in one of my introductory courses is what I want to talk about.

I'm stealing here from the work of a writer called Daphne Patai, who published an article in Women's Studies International Forum (winter, 1983), called "Beyond

Defensiveness: Feminist Research Strategies." She was talking about women's utopian fiction, but I'm applying her model to the development of Lesbian Studies content, Lesbian Studies courses, and Lesbian Studies programmes.

The first approach she calls "Claiming the generic and the universal," that is, reclaiming the generic and the universal. Instead of letting it belong to men—or to the heterosexual world, or to heterosexism,—claim it as belonging to lesbian perspective, lesbian experience. What this would mean in practice would be to describe our projects as if the lesbian experience were the human norm. This would mean rejecting the dominant heterosexist paradigm simply by acting as if the lesbian perspective is a generic perspective, and as if lesbians constitute the female norm, or a female norm.

So, instead of calling something, say, lesbian women's writings in x time and place, it's simply writings about something or other in women's time and place. Lo and behold, the content is, guess who? This reclaims the generic, it makes a shift in what is considered the universal. Let me give you a concrete example.

I was really unhappy with the way I taught the introductory course last year, because it was almost inevitably North American and European, middle class Women's Studies. So this year I thought I would try to generalize from the experience of marginalized groups, without saying much about it, just present those groups as the normal and universal and see what happened. The three textbooks I'm using are *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* by Paula Giddings—superb history; *Surpassing the Love of Men, Romantic Friendships between Women from the Renaissance to the Present*, by Lillian Faderman, and *Quebec Women, A History*. In the Canadian context, the marginalized group is Quebec women; in the context of racism, the universal experience is that of women of colour; and in the context of sexual orientation and lesbianism and heterosexist oppression, the norm is the lesbian experience, or at least a lesbian-positive experience. It's been very interesting to see how that has shifted the dynamics. In terms of possible reactions, I personally haven't been present at sessions where there have been homophobic or hostile, anti-lesbian discussions; if

something like that comes up in a class, the students have tended to squelch it pretty rapidly. So on the whole I've felt pretty encouraged.

A student and I went on CBC radio for International Women's Day last year. Among other things, we talked about how anti-racism was a core feminist issue and how heterosexism, anti-heterosexism and pro-lesbianism were core feminist issues. When the moderator said that perhaps lesbianism was a little bit off topic, Louise and I both said "No, no, it's absolutely central to feminism." I wasn't sure what the reaction was going to be at the Institute, but everybody jumped up and down and said, "Good for you."

Now, the second thing that Daphne Patai talks about is labelling heterosexual Women's Studies as heterosexual. That means we don't talk about "feminist theorists of 19th century Britain." If they are heterosexual, we talk about "heterosexual women theorists of 19th century Britain." That helps to make visible first of all what the perspective is; that it is a perspective, and not just something that got handed down from God. It also helps to make visible how skewed that perspective can make Women's Studies, if it's presented as the only natural, normal, universal perspective.

This is the strategy that I'm going to be using at Athabasca. When I was interviewed, the Women's Studies Hiring Committee asked me what Women's Studies courses should contain. I said I thought they absolutely had to contain gender, race and class analyses as central, heterosexism as a problem, and Lesbian Studies content as integral to Women's Studies. And they all smiled and nodded and offered me the job! So they know that's what they're getting.

I don't think there's going to be much of a problem at Athabasca, and I think there will be a strong lesbian perspective between the two of us they've hired to do the job. If there is a problem, I predict we're going to use Patai's two strategies. We're going to label heterosexual Women's Studies as such, and we're going to insinuate as much lesbian content as we can—as the generic, as the Women's Studies universal—and see what happens. After we get the existing, designated core courses

going, then we'll be working on bringing in specifically labelled Lesbian Studies courses. I don't know whether Patai's strategy will work, but the little bit that I've seen suggests that it will.



PAIN DISTORTS



A Mother's Letter to Her Daughter

"What is love? I wasn't demonstrative enough but I have always loved you fiercely. When I came to Edna's I was 5 months pregnant, I was considered a low life bitch for getting pregnant. I'll never forget how numb I felt; it was strange, I had no feeling about anything. I was so unhappy I was in shock. This was the time in a woman's life when she should be happy!

I went from one job to the next with my wee baby, was down on the cape in So. Yarmouth with a bastard English man. He had a twelve year old son, who thought he should use me. He was very tight so I was hungry all the time but I made sure you had enough food. Then I went to Bragg's. I think you were 4 years old. I couldn't stay at home because Ma was sure I was having intercourse with Pa, that house! (home was horrible) Ma made me go upstairs at night ahead of her by 7:30 or 8 pm, and I couldn't come down until Pa went to work next morning. I peed in a pail. That's why Eve's book is about incest. We girls were all accused of being intimate with Pa. I never even touched him! Never, never kissed him, my own father! I could have been a prostitute or an alcoholic and go out when I was at Bragg's. I felt I was a fool for having married and fallen in love so fiercely with Al, your father. I have tried to put it behind me.

I don't even know what love means. Why I keep on I don't know. I've gone through so many kinds of Hell."

This letter/text was derived from a letter sent to me by my mother about her difficulties when I was first born and in my early years. Before single-parenting was an acceptable social act, my mother endured great hardship through family ridicule and social discrimination. She worked continuously as a nurse or as a housekeeper trying to make ends meet. I have incorporated this letter/text into a large outstretched painting (13 ft. by 6 ft.), entitled "...and now what."

Dyana Werden

Views and Reviews

Double Tunnel Vision: Some Thoughts On The Writing Of History

Jo Vellacott

I have a picture in my mind of two people, a man and a woman, sitting in the same room, looking out the window at a wide panorama. At first glance this may appear to be a cosy enough set-up; but they are not talking to each other, and seem hardly aware of each other's presence, except for an intangible hostility that can be sensed. Looking more closely, I see that each is looking at the view with one eye (the other being closed), through a cardboard tube, which effectively means that he or she sees only a tiny little circle cut out of the picture spread before the window. Down below is the teeming past, full of figures of men and women, distanced by time but still replete with many vivid details. Yet it is hard to understand what is going on in that world out there unless you can see the whole scene.

What is going on in the room regrettably becomes easy to understand when you learn that the two figures are historians, one a feminist historian, the other a malestream historian. Historians have long had some problems bridging the gaps that can develop between social history, political history, statistical history, the history of ideas, and so on. But none of these gaps is like the gulf that has developed between malestream history and feminist history.

No one would deny that a historian must focus on what interests her/him; the field is too wide for us all to be specialists in every area. Unfortunately we shall not see even our chosen subject clearly unless we have some perception of the context, which inevitably is not neatly sex-segregated. For many years male historians, who have dominated and continue to dominate the profession, have stumbled over fascinating documentation of the part played by women, and have not even seen what it was they were falling over. Not only has this led to more space than substance in what history has had to say about women, but it has led to myths and errors which

extend to the writers' own favoured topics as well as to the history of women. I have begun to make a collection of the egregious errors that I find in the secondary works on my period of specialisation. The kind of inaccuracy that interests me is not just incidental but leads to, or reinforces, a failure of understanding and interpretation.

I would like to be able to claim that none of the blunders in my collection are in works by women, let alone by feminists. Unfortunately, women have been forced to read so much male history that at times they understandably find it hard to read more, and so neglect the secondary texts which help define the context for the women's history they want to pursue.

One could certainly theorise endlessly about the hidden reasons for the double tunnel vision of historians. As far as the malestream historians are concerned, feminists have already done a good deal of damning analysis. Whether we believe that big and little errors and sweeping omissions come from a half, or even completely, conscious desire to deny women the power that comes from knowing our own history, or whether we attribute them simply to a blithe male attitude arising from generations of being taught to believe that what happens to women is of little consequence, we have to admit that the criticisms are often valid. More important is the wonderful richness of women's past which has been revealed in the last twenty years.

For us who read it, this long overdue resurgence of women's history has considerably changed the landscape and has put us back into it. To return to the metaphor I began with, there are now some of us looking out the window who can recognize that half the figures in that wide landscape are female, and can begin to see what they are doing. Yet we will not have the full dimension of all we are seeing unless we notice the women's interactions with the male figures, any more than those writing "men's history" can understand the full picture when the female figures are invisible to them.

It may be a feminist truism to say that many male historians are half blinded by their tunnel vision. It is harder to accept the truth that I cannot be a good feminist

historian if I try to avoid reading mainstream history; and that I will have done a more useful job as a historian if I can write in such a way that some of my insights and new knowledge find their way into a stream of history which should be neither women's history nor men's history, but just history.

What I am trying to say needs to be illustrated. The topic on which I am currently writing is women's struggle to gain the vote in Britain before the First World War. At some other time I would like to try to explain why I think that feminists who contribute to the myth of the glorious achievements of the militant suffragettes, at the expense of the hard, long drawn out, and much more effective political work of the so-called non-militant suffragists, are playing a game set up for them by the anti-suffragist politicians of the time. That one is a long story, and I do not have space here for it; so I will try to pick a smaller example of the kind of tunnel vision that I think can be avoided, and that it is crucial to the future and worth of history and of a feminist tradition to avoid.

During the years 1912-1914 the non-militant women's suffragists in Britain, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), gave support to the Labour Party, the "third party," and the only party which would commit itself to the cause of women's suffrage. It was primarily a strategic alliance designed to put pressure on the Liberal Party, the minority ruling party, which had let the women's suffragists down time and again, but it also reflected the changing political orientation of some suffragist women. The NUWSS, through a special Election Fighting Fund (EFF) provided substantial funds. More important, they provided a team of intelligent, carefully trained political workers (all women and many of them from the working class—there goes another myth), who would work up constituencies before by-elections, and who did considerable groundwork in a number of ridings in preparation for the general election which was to occur in 1915, but which was postponed when war broke out in August, 1914.

A great deal has been written in the past fifteen to twenty years about the history of the Labour Party during this period. Scarcely one mainstream historian as much as mentions the work of the EFF, though they must have bumped into traces of the

evidence again and again in the sources they consulted. The results are distortion and unanswered questions in otherwise admirable work.

So why should I read what has been written by these historians who don't mention women? The fact is that I had no idea until I studied the work of Labour historians how very major the enterprise of the EFF had been and what an impact it might have had on that cancelled general election. The history of the Labour Party shows it to have been seriously short of funds at this time, and to have had—partly because of its newness, its poverty, and a perhaps unavoidably cumbersome structure—notoriously poor organization, especially at the constituency level. Other detailed research has established that under existing electoral law, many voters (especially in the working class) lost their franchise in every election unless a sustained effort was made by the interested political parties to make sure that qualified voters took considerable pains to get themselves on to the register. Yet other research sheds light on the complicated relationship between the Liberal and Labour Parties.

Only when I set the fruits of my research in place against this background knowledge of the Labour Party and the electoral system, can the work of the EFF be seen in its true proportion. The score of fulltime organizers paid by the EFF had at their fingertips exactly those details of election work in which the Labour Party was most lacking. I knew from correspondence I had seen that they were more than welcome both to the Labour Party's struggling single national agent and to local candidates; now I know exactly why. Labour Party candidates and workers, not incidentally, knew the difference between the NUWSS and the militants, a difference which the opponents of suffrage at the time, and many successive historians, have done their best to blur.

My point, then, is that we cannot do justice to women's history if we try to do it in a vacuum; I am sure that this could be shown to be true in a much wider sphere than the political stage which is an important focus of my present work. What we have to do is throw away the cardboard tubes, and start discussing with each other what it is that we each see in that wide panorama of the past. There may be many

male historians who are not fully ready to listen to feminist historians yet—and that includes some of those men who write women's history and even call themselves feminist—but we will all be the losers if we fail to get the dialogue going.



Clare

On Reviewing and Being Reviewed

Peta Tancred-Sheriff

I am sure that many of us have had the experience of reviewing work by co-feminists and that we have found this, in multiple ways, a tearing experience. Surely feminist writing is "good" writing? Isn't it rather shameful on our part to have critical thoughts about the work in hand? In fact, aren't we being downright disloyal if what we really want to write is so negative that we are afraid that no respectable journal will put our fiery prose on paper? I don't want to simplify the issue, but these doubts and questions have undoubtedly settled heavily on many feminist souls—and are also being discussed widely in the literature, if the Feminist Studies forum on the subject is any indication (14, 3, Fall 1988).

I had a recent version of this experience in reviewing what I considered to be a disappointing book by some anglophone co-feminists, and I anguished over the extent to which I could come down as heavily on them as I would on any other colleague. However, at about the same time, I had the doubtful pleasure of being on the receiving end of some negative reactions to my own recent work, in this case an edited volume. Two co-feminists took particular exception to the inclusion of a specific article and, in the process, criticized my work as editor of the volume. Inevitably, these two experiences have come together in terms of reflection and have propelled me to put computer to paper.

In terms of my own "power" position as reviewer, I resented my self-imposed feeling of being "muzzled" by the fact that I was dealing with feminist rather than masculinist work. While I did not know the authors personally, I had met one of them—and knew generally of their standing in the feminist community. In fact, part of my disappointment was that I expected better work on the basis of the reputation that preceded these scholars, so that I was particularly disappointed, and thus angry, that they had not lived up to my expectations. And in the rather intellectual discussion of this issue, I find that this theme of our expectations of feminist work is not really raised. The feminist community, at least in Canada, is small enough

that our political allegiance to feminism is overlaid with our associations with particular individuals; so we don't really approach feminist reviewing in the same laidback fashion that we might approach the work of male colleagues. In fact, we can easily fall into maternal postures in our expectations of feminist work.

What's the answer? While I agree with Natalie Zemon Davis and others who argue generally that inadequate work does not help the cause of feminism and that if the work is inadequate, we should say so, I think some recognition of the role of expectations in our reactions to feminist work could be underlined. If my review of the disappointing work had included the information that I had put aside part of my Christmas vacation in anticipation of a "good feminist read" and that I had accepted the review, at a very busy time, because I anticipated not just intellectual satisfaction but real joy in the experience—then readers of my review could take this context into account in reading my opinions. In this sense, I agree with Linda Gardiner in the Feminist Studies forum (p. 619) that we should identify what we are bringing to our reading, though she seems to be thinking still in terms of ascribed characteristics of ethnicity and class, while I am thinking of laying my expectations on the table, wherever they might come from.

How does this help in my experience of being reviewed? Let me admit, first of all, that this experience was not a complete parallel, for most of the criticism in this case was being directed at the content of an article, and I only came in for a tongue-lashing because I had, supposedly, not recognized its non-feminist nature. Nevertheless, my judgement was still being called into question as was my lack of scholarly skills in not recognizing "inadequate" work. In fact, the whole issue of expectations came into play once again. The authors of the critical review clearly had certain assumptions in mind about the nature of feminism which led them to expect certain kinds of work. What they did not do was to say: look, in our view, good feminists believe that red is better than black (or whatever euphemism you want to use) and with this measuring rod, this is not a good, feminist article. In addition, they might have had specific expectations of me, as someone they knew by reputation at least. In general, the context of their review was not clear; they were

not reflexive about this context, and in the same way that I did not put my expectations on paper as a reviewer, they did not do so either.

Clearly, the parallel between feminist and general reviewing cannot be exact. Because of the nature of the feminist community (still relatively small and also politically involved), we cannot review co-feminists in the same way that we review the work of other colleagues. We bring a much heavier "baggage" to the task of reviewing than would be true in most intellectual circles, a baggage that must have some influence in our reviewing of feminist colleagues. Certainly, it is acceptable in many journals to spell out some expectations with respect to a work under review, but the kinds of expectations that I have outlined (joy in a good read, one's specific definition of feminism) might be considered trivial or, alternatively, might not be manifest to the reviewer herself. Thus, I am pleading for a much greater contextualizing of feminist reviewing—really pushing ourselves to delineate where we are coming from, not only intellectually, but also politically and affectively.

The problem will be modified over time as we move from "sisterhood to society," as Natalie Zemon Davis expresses the matter (same forum, p. 603). Certainly, as the feminist community becomes much more numerous and diverse, we might know less about our sister feminists, leading to less baggage. However, the context must remain salient—for we will vary increasingly amongst ourselves, and it could be of even greater importance to know where the reviewer is coming from. In fact, many of our male colleagues, in a more societal environment, could well profit from the same principle; it might be less amusing as the cut and thrust of reviews is tempered by the reviewer's acknowledgement of her/his own biases, but amusement at the price of a colleague's career is a very expensive form of comedy.

Temma F. Berg, Anna Shannon Eifenbein, Jeanne Larsen, Elisa Kay Sparks, eds. *Engendering the Word: Feminist Essays in Psychosexual Poetics*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989.

Marleen S. Barr Richard Feldstein, eds. *Discontented Discourses: Feminism, Textual Intervention, Psychoanalysis*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989.

Engendering the Word and *Discontented Discourses* are two recent contributions to a growing body of reflection on the uses of psychoanalytic theories for feminist literary criticism. The difficulties and rewards attendant upon any attempt to combine feminist and psychoanalytic analysis have been investigated in such groundbreaking works as Juliet Mitchell's 1974 *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* and Jane Gallop's 1982 *The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis*. More recently, the editors of *The (M)other Tongue: Essays in Feminist Psychoanalytic Interpretation* (1985)—a volume which might have served as a model for the anthologies under consideration here—have argued that although an alliance between feminism and psychoanalysis might strike one as a contradictory phenomenon given "feminist opposition to patriarchal systems of organization, including those that structure or support Freud's thought," one could also draw on Freud's thought (and that of a revisionary discipline like Lacan) to further probe the complexity of oedipal socialization and the significance of preoedipal stages of development.

Although of the two anthologies *Discontented Discourses* is the more psychoanalytic in its orientation, both collections are less interested in 'applying' specific psychoanalytic models and terminologies, and more concerned with pursuing an interrogation of prevailing masculinist models of behaviour, experience, and response—an interrogation that is informed and sustained by the meeting points of psychoanalysis and feminism. This interrogation is further complemented by what the editors of *Discontented Discourses* describe as double gesture: "towards ending

Woman's silence and realizing the potential of her freed subjectivity." The dual imperative to expose patriarchal structures and celebrate new feminist paradigms is exemplified by Victoria Frenkel Harris' essay in *Discontented Discourses*, entitled "Scribe, Inscription, Inscribed: Sexuality in the Poetry of Robert Bly and Adrienne Rich." Harris' theoretical negotiation between (and appropriation of) psychoanalytic and feminist models leads her to formulate an understanding of the gendered subject as inserted within a phallogentric (Lacanian) symbolic order, yet as retaining (feminist) agency. Challenging Freud's biological essentialism, Harris extends Lacan's analysis of the subject's entry into the symbolic (which for the female subject means a recognition of lack—she lacks the phallic signifier) to involve questions of power; in her own analysis, the abstracted psychoanalytic female subject is replaced by the subjugated woman who is rendered powerless by a culture which maintains oppressive domination by feminizing everything that does not empower. Her reading of Bly's poetry shows that while he has done much to expose the patriarchal domination of Western Culture, his poetry nonetheless still reveals "the pernicious authority of a discredited but still powerful patriarchy." Drawing on Nancy Chodorow's understanding of female identity as relational, Harris finds in Adrienne Rich's poetry the articulation of a different vision, a vision which rejects binaries and celebrates mutuality, one which subverts masculinist discourse through the process of inclusion—by inserting woman's marginal position into public discourse.

Several essays in *Discontented Discourses* engage more directly with psychoanalytic theories (on Dora's case, on the "Family Affair" between Feminism and Psychoanalysis, on the 'masculinity' of Science and 'femininity' of Literature); others further investigate the inscription of gender in male-authored texts: Woody Allen's cinema, works by J.S. Mill, Joyce, Barthelme, and Dickens. The essays on women's writing deal with some well known writers such as Woolf, H.D., and Cixous, as well as with other important issues such as representations of lesbian sexuality in fiction, and the repression of the 'other' woman in feminist theory.

Engendering the Word also combines explorations of better known American women writers (Emily Dickinson, Marianne Moore, H.D., Adrienne Rich) with

critical readings of male-authored texts (by T.S. Eliot and Harold Bloom, among others), and theoretical reflections on the psychoanalytic idioms of Freud, Lacan, Cixous, Irigaray, and Kristeva. In this collection, however, the voice of 'other women'—women of colour, women of the 'other' Americas—is stronger, their presence more visible. Our understanding of the traditions of women's writing is enriched by the inclusion of Chilean, Argentinean, and Spanish-American writers. Still, one could argue that here, as in *Discontented Discourses*, the (relatively) canonical wins over the more acutely oppressed, and generic, generalizing questions—what effect does gender have on the experiences of reading and writing? How can theories of psychosexuality help us understand the grounds of poesis?—tend to push out of sight more historically specific preoccupations with the contingencies of class and race: the differences *between* women.

Engendering the Word and *Discontented Discourses* attest to the considerable interpretive powers of a psychoanalytic feminist critical matrix. Our understanding of individual works is often enriched by the introduction of a perspective and a set of concepts and hypotheses intended to account for the development of gendered identities and the inscription of that difference in language and writing. As Sandra Gilbert suggests in her Foreword to *Engendering the Word*, "we cannot understand who we are and how we behave as producers of language without also trying to grasp who and what we are as 'masculine' and 'feminine' linguistic subjects." One does question, however, the tendency of psychoanalytic feminist criticism to operate almost exclusively within an arena neatly demarcated by the Law of the Father—an arena within which the points of reference remain Freud and Lacan, and within which resisting daughters can be easily contained. As *literary* criticism, psychoanalytic feminist criticism seems to retain a similar paternalism; the Fathers, in this context, appear to be the New Critics, as many of the essays treat text as self-contained autonomous entities. In subscribing to such views, psychoanalytic feminist criticism remains oblivious to the many challenges of a cultural materialist perspective, and uninterested in such vital issues as canon formation, and the crucial intersections of class, race, and gender. Introducing *Discontented Discourses*, Marleen S. Barr speaks of the volume's interest in "locating Woman's desire . . . ending Woman's suffering and anxiety." What this conceptualization of the feminist project leaves

out is precisely "women," a category used by Teresa de Lauretis to refer to "the real historical beings who cannot as yet be defined outside of those discursive formations [which define Woman], but whose material existence is nonetheless certain" (*Alice Doesn't*). In investigating the relation between women as historical subjects and the notion of Woman as it is produced by the hegemonic discourses, de Lauretis focuses on what makes possible both representation and self-representation. By effectively demonstrating the non-coincidence of "Woman" and "women," de Lauretis makes room for feminist agency and resistance. It is this important critical and political dimension that one misses most in psychoanalytic feminist criticism.

Bina Freiwald

Lorraine Code, Sheila Mullett and Christine Overall (Eds.), *Feminist Perspectives: Philosophical Essays on Method and Morals*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.

Feminist Perspectives (1988) is a contemporary effort to organize the central preoccupations of the philosophical enterprise, particularly as they intersect with key concerns in feminism. And it is well organized. Unlike (too) many anthologies, *Feminist Perspectives* is very even in style as well as scholarship. It is comprised of two sections, "Method" and "Morals." In the first, the authors critically address the assumptions of traditional (read: malestream) philosophy: the privileging of ungrounded theory (abstract generalities above the concrete); and, the adversarial method of establishing hypothetical counter-examples to prove the truth or falsity of the logic of an argument (the reification of dichotomous modes of thought). They then offer a feminist corrective to the universalizing and competitive tendencies in imposing categories on the real world, and the structure of logical thought. The spirit of a new feminist, philosophical methodology would embrace the experiential and a sense of co-operation. The authors urge that women's experiences inform the philosophical regard for "ways of knowing." As Petra von Morstein writes, in "A Message from Cassandra—experience and knowledge: dichotomy and unity": "There can be no viable method of philosophical enquiry that does not rest on self-determined articulation of experience"(49). The incorporation of women's experiences into philosophy should effectively shift the balance in what is considered essential for grounds of acceptability and criticism.

The epistemological assumptions behind the *knowledge vs. experience* dichotomy are explored in Lorraine Code's, "Credibility: a double standard." Discussing the 1984 Grange Inquiry into infant deaths at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children, and drawing from the observations of Alice Baumgart, Code notes that, on the witness stand, nurses and doctors were questioned rather differently. Doctors were assumed to offer authoritative comments based on their knowledge; nurses, on the other hand, were typically questioned in terms of their *experience* (i.e., "Based

on your *experience* . . .") Within the "politics of knowledge," *experience* is downplayed and cognitive authority resides with expert *knowledge*. Code argues that the imposition of stereotypes onto gender expectations prevents the incorporation of women and the feminine into abstract structures of cognition and morality. She writes: "Woman's place in the epistemic community *per se* and her place in the moral community alike block access to the authoritative public being that knowledge and/or moral maturity confer(s) upon its possessors" (78). Greater "epistemic responsibility" in philosophical discourse would include "experiential, emotional, practical and subjective elements" (78). As well, she suggests greater sensitivity to the notion of "differences" rather than dichotomous thinking, arguing that this would open onto a range of possible visions, other than the limitations of the conflictual model which establishes pairs of hierarchical opposites (either/or). Other essays in this section are "Feminism, objectivity, and legal truth," by Marsha P. Hanen and "Feminism, ontology, and 'other minds,'" by Christine Overall.

"Morals," the second section, moves from questions of methodology to feminist ethics and attempts "to produce a shift in perspective away from systems of knowledge and valuation that render women's suffering invisible or simply irrelevant" (109). Sheila Mullett ("Shifting perspective: a new approach to ethics") characterizes moral agency, within traditional objectivist philosophy, as "hopelessly abstract and obscure." Questions of moral goodness, or concerns which are other-focussed, typically treat the moral subject as an actor in social isolation from other actors. The tenet of the pure, distilled moral subject acting in the interests of the common good is abstract and "utterly removed from social and political understanding" (112). Instead, Mullett proposes a tripartite ethical theory which locates moral consciousness in a more reflexively social context. Its component parts are moral sensitivity, ontological shock and praxis. Moral sensitivity refers to "an anguished awareness of violence, victimization, and pain," (114). Ontological shock is the corresponding re-vision and reformulation of circumstances which give rise to woman's individual and collective suffering. This engenders a new appreciation, keenly political, of *making visible* the social arrangements which often obscure the prevalence of evil (often implicit) directed against women. And, praxis is the move

to collectively transform both consciousness and the status quo (to politicize the shared philosophical vision).

Also included are "Women and moral madness" by Kathryn Pauly Morgan and "Self-abnegation" by Bonnelle Lewis Strickling. By way of conclusion, I want to offer brief critical comments on two articles. In a very clear discussion of pornography and public morality, "Pornographic harms," Jacqueline MacGregor Davies re-asserts the maxim "the personal is political." She assesses the nuisance, threat and defamation arguments. Davies is particularly sensitive to the problems in trying to formulate consensual definitions of the *right to privacy* and vulnerability to harm (as in the nuisance argument); or, problems in measuring a social threat against freedom of speech (as in the threat argument). Regarding the defamation position, outstanding problems remain with establishing proof that the so-called defamatory statement is indeed false. On this score, Davies asserts the important (although uncredited) Foucauldian denunciation of *essential* sexuality: "The problem with the denial of these misogynistic 'statements' is that their refutation requires appeal to either normative or empirical claims about what women *really* are" (134). Having said this, however, Davies still reifies *reality* as against the representation, as though symbols and representations are somehow unreal (or subversive of the real). She cites as troubling (if not downright pernicious) that woman in pornography "mean(s) being a symbol" (136). I'd like to offer two related comments. Firstly, there are bodies of literature which argue persuasively that cognition and specifically the negotiation of sexual identities are largely unconscious, ambiguous and contradictory, and fully dependent on symbols (linguistic and visual). In that sense, we only know the world through the representations we have of it. To denounce something merely *as a symbol* is to shift emphasis away from the more fruitful investigation of how these symbols work in the structured unconscious, and how they can be deconstructed, on their own terms, to problematize alternate readings. Secondly, one is frequently left wondering if those espousing the humanist, feminist position on pornography (which in this article, as with many, is left undefined) have actually looked at pornographic magazines and films. If they did (and this is especially so of contemporary magazines) they would have to acknowledge that the photographs are replete with signifiers of masculinity. Davies writes that "only" images or signs

of women are exchanged. But the questions are begging: is 'woman' immediately recognizable? is this grounded in biology? what is a *sign* of woman or femininity? how is biology, femaleness and femininity signified or communicated? how do we know that what we are looking at is a *woman*? (As some authors have argued, the *woman* in pornographic imagery speaks a masculine vocabulary; as well, men, or fragments of their bodies, frequently dominate hard-core photographs. This complicates the purely phallic argument that banishes all contradiction from the discourse/photograph.) The concepts that Davies employs are highly abstract (*object, woman, sexuality*) and not grounded in symbolic (i.e., social and historical) imagery.

In short, a summary concern I'm left with after reading all these articles relates to the category of the *experiential* itself. I fear that without careful consideration, appeals to *experience* may too often bring us back to the *body*. And, the highlighting of *experience* may privilege the speaking, conscious *voice of the author*, as though it too were without ambiguity and contradiction. As Toril Moi notes, it is only through the radical exposure of tensions, frictions, ambivalences in the text (of the subject, of the photograph) that escape from any hegemonic code is possible (*Sexual/Textual Politics*).

One is left with the same set of concerns after reading Barbara Houston's "Gilligan and the politics of a distinctive women's morality." Houston addresses Carol Gilligan's re-reading of Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development and Gilligan's critics (including Kohlberg). In *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Gilligan argues that women have a distinctive morality, due to their more holistic and less instrumental orientation towards people and the processes of judgement and value formation. Her research methodology uses simulated laboratory techniques in which male and female subjects are asked to elaborate on fantasy scenarios, to provide a narrative to accompany a photograph, or to answer questions such as, "what does it mean to say something is morally right or wrong?" Gilligan has been criticized for relying on the conscious utterances of her interview subjects. But in fact she does; and there is nothing inherently sexist in pointing this out. Houston argues that Gilligan's critics believe "what women say about themselves and their moral lives is defensiveness, wishful thinking, or fantasy,

as opposed to insight, knowledge, and fact" (173). However, it is important to resurrect the fundamental Freudian insight (as Kohlberg does) that we (both men and women) often deceive ourselves: we can never know (because we don't have one) our essential selves. In that sense, critics of Gilligan offer an important critique of positivism—the fetish for visibility, measurement, the *essential* truth—which can be very useful for feminism.

The questions I have raised do not point out the limitations of this book; they may point to limitations within philosophy but only to urge respect for other disciplines as well as the loosening of boundaries among them, a true appreciation of difference in the service of co-operation.

Berkeley Kaite

Mary Field Belenky, Blyth McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, Jill Mattuck Tarule. *Women's ways of knowing: the development of self, voice and mind*. New York: Basic Books, 1986.

Women's ways of knowing is centrally situated in recent American feminist work on psychology, philosophy and pedagogy, part, the authors say, of a *Zeitgeist* (19). It draws on work by Nancy Chodorow, Jean Baker Miller, Sarah Ruddick, Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings, among others, that holds that the personality structures and moral universes of women are characterised by connectedness, responsibility and care. According to the framework developed by the research team, these characteristics lead to five distinct developmental stages in knowing: from Silence to Received, Subjective, Procedural and Constructed Knowledge. Each stage is a configuration of self-concept, capacity to speak (referred to as "voice"), and modes of assessing the authority or truth of knowledge claims. Ways of knowing are then determined directly by gender and indirectly by social factors like class, race/ethnicity, family organisation and relation to (broadly defined) educational institutions.

This patterning has implications for learning. Since the structure, curriculum and pedagogy of most educational institutions were designed by men (190), this distinctiveness means that women are not well served by education, particularly at the post-secondary level. New ways of teaching, sensitive to women's needs, must be developed. Indeed, the research was supported by the Fund for Improvement of Post Secondary Education's Education for Women's Development Project.

In many ways, the work meets the criteria of the "new feminist scholarship." It shows the categories of previous authoritative work, in this case William Perry's studies of the intellectual and ethical development of male Harvard undergraduates in the 1960s, to be androcentric and not generalisable to women. It criticizes the dualistic splits of masculinity and scholarship that dichotomize emotion and intellect. The research techniques too are sensitive to ethical and methodological critiques of instrumentalism. Intensive interviews, which were usually held in a place of the

woman's choice, started off by asking what was "important about life and learning *from her point of view*" [original emphasis, 11]. The analysts developed a "contextual analysis" (16). After blind coding, they listened to the interviews several times with a view to allowing the women's stories, voices and purposes to emerge. As Perry's categories were revealed to be inappropriate, new concepts (and here the precepts of grounded theory were followed) were developed.

One of the most innovative aspects, for psychological research, arises from the attempt to take class, race and ethnic differences among women into account (and to go beyond the homogenous captive undergraduate populations of young, white males so often researched). Indeed, simply recognising class and race as significant variables goes some way to counter criticisms of most traditional and some feminist psychological analysis as overgeneralising. Of the 135 interviews, 90 were held with individuals enrolled in formal college programmes, while 45 came from women located in three family agencies. Conceiving of these women (many of whom were single mothers or women involved in histories of child abuse and family violence) also as learners pursuing chosen paths and the agencies as "invisible colleges" helps reinforce their dignity.

To respond to Peta Tancred-Sheriff's criteria for the politics of reviewing (in this issue), I should say that my thinking about this work has been influenced not just by my own theoretical commitments, but also by my experience using the book in a women's studies class at a new institution. Beginning with *Women's ways of knowing* would, I thought, buy some time so that I could check out rumours of large class sizes and of a lack of theoretical training among students. Any political resistance to "Theory" as elitist or unease about its difficulties would be met by its programmatic support for reflexive, "passionate scholarship" (to use Barbara Du Bois's term) as a developmental goal and possibility. In other words, I was planning to rely on the text's *unacknowledged* hierarchical message rather than its own theoretical sophistication. The plan did not work. The students were angry with the book in ways that spotlighted problems arising from its empiricism and developmentalism in new ways.

First, the work is uncritically empiricist. Like Gilligan's work on ethics, the research operates with "woman" as a natural, category. An assumption is made, as a colleague put it, that "talking to a bunch of people who do not have penises will tell you something" about difference. As a result, despite including women of different race, ethnic and class origins, a self-evident gender difference is assumed, the very thing that needs to be explained. Although Perry's androcentrism is challenged, other aspects of his method are not. Is it possible that those privileged young (white?) men were themselves not well served by Perry's own empiricism and fractionalising instrumental discourse? Or that not all men students are well served by existing academic institutions?

Similarly, the self, a central category of the title is reduced to an (only descriptive defined) "self-concept." Claims that "connection" is characteristic of the feminine self are apparently supported by Chodorow's development of object relations theory. But closer reading reveals that her work is only referenced, no theoretical relations are actually specified, and her account is eclectically grouped with Ruddick, Miller and Gilligan without any discussion of theoretical and methodological differences between psychoanalytic and empirical approaches or between philosophy and psychology. Most important here is the reductionist use of self-concept—or to switch languages, decontextualized unitary subject, one that students immediately rejected, with justice equally empirically, as inadequate to explain their own situationally specific movement from voice to silence and back. The methodological implications are both that talk is transparent and that the analysts can find "meanings" that the women did not know they uttered. How and by what authority, the students asked, can these both be true? Especially, I would add, when neither is theorized.

Furthermore, some students attacked its implicitly developmental hierarchy as elitist. One charged that the way the text funnelled readers to want to achieve the fifth, "Constructed" stage was manipulative because it did not acknowledge that that stage replicated the authors' own social (and subject) positions. Others challenged the democratic, inclusive aim of the research by pointing out that the writers did not acknowledge the seriousness of social and economic barriers which prevented marginalised women from finding institutions which were equivalent to the elite

colleges that fostered the last developmental stages. The untheorized but implicitly unitary *decontextualized* subject that lies behind the empirical "self-concept" wipes out differences between and within individual women, and fails to take account of the complexity of overlapping subject positions that women occupy, constructed not least by differences of race, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation, as well as by processes of transition. On the other hand, most were prepared to acknowledge that this fifth stage, where knowledge is understood as constructed and the knower seen as part of the known (137) and where techniques of reasoning can both be used and criticized in terms of personal values, was clearly more empowering than the silence which resulted from social isolation and familial abuse. Are the implications that empowerment is to be achieved at the cost of becoming white, middle class academics? they asked.

Pointing to these problems, however, does not mean that the book's critiques of educational institutions (and the more muted consideration of the consequences of class) are blunted or that the strategies discussed for reforming the relation of teaching and learning are irrelevant. Rather, it points to the necessity of developing theory that both supports strategies of real inclusiveness and respects women's diverse and complicated voices.

Heather Jon Maroney

Andrée Lévesque, *La norme et les déviantes: des femmes au Québec pendant l'entre-deux-guerres*, Montréal, Les éditions du remue-ménage, 1989. 233p.

Avant même d'ouvrir ce livre, le nom de son auteure nous laisse déjà deviner qu'il sera écrit dans une optique féministe. Effectivement, Andrée Lévesque, docteure de l'Université Duke aux États-Unis, actuellement professeure d'histoire à l'université McGill à Montréal, s'est déjà acquis une solide réputation dans le domaine du savoir féministe. Ajoutons qu'une partie de ce travail a été accomplie alors qu'elle était attachée de recherche à l'Institut Simone de Beauvoir pour les études de la femme.

Si Andrée Lévesque a choisi ici de concentrer son attention sur l'histoire des femmes au Québec pendant l'entre-deux-guerres, c'est en partie parce que ces années, de 1919 à 1939, sont marquées par de grands bouleversements et qu'elles sont ainsi porteuses déjà peut-être de la non moins grande transformation que nous connaissons aujourd'hui sous le nom de Révolution tranquille.

C'est effectivement à cette époque que, de rurale qu'elle était, la majorité de la population de la province s'urbanise. Cet exode rural, aussi bien vers les États-Unis que vers les villes du Québec, cette industrialisation toute nouvelle, la dépression économique, avec le chômage et la misère qui les accompagnent, vont donner un sérieux coup de canif dans le contrat social qui semble avoir prévalu dans les années qui ont précédé la Première Guerre mondiale.

Le propos de l'auteure est d'étudier la réalité féminine de cette période à partir de deux thèmes précis: "La reproduction constituant la mission privilégiée des femmes et la sexualité, qui y est si étroitement liée, définissant aussi la spécificité féminine, ces deux thèmes s'imposèrent comme principe organisateur de tout le travail" (p.7). Partant du principe que l'on ne cherche à interdire que ce qui existe ou à imposer que ce qui ne fait pas l'unanimité, Lévesque a choisi une approche

parallèle à ces deux questions. Dans un premier temps, elle étudie le discours officiel, voire officieux, qui s'y rapporte; dans un deuxième temps, elle travaille l'autre moitié de cette dichotomie, le comportement réel des femmes ou de bon nombre d'entre elles. Ce double travail lui permet de conclure, d'une part, que le discours normatif est lui-même dû aux remous sociaux puisqu'ils constituent un effort désespéré, mais vain, de freiner les changements qui ont lieu, et, d'autre part, qu'entre le discours et la pratique effective des femmes l'écart s'agrandit.

L'on peut alors constater que, si le discours officiel—la loi, l'Église, la médecine—interdisait, pour diverses raisons, le contrôle des naissances, le taux de fécondité, soit le nombre de naissances pour 1000 femmes de 15 à 49 ans, baisse entre 1921 à 1941 de 155 à 102. De même, si la sexualité, surtout féminine, n'était en principe tolérée par le pouvoir qu'à l'intérieur du mariage, il n'en reste pas moins que plus de deux mille enfants illégitimes sont nés tous les ans au Québec pendant cette période là, ce qui évidemment n'inclut pas les naissances légitimées par un mariage hâtif, ni les avortements. Quant à la prostitution, objet des discours les plus virulents, il semble que les prostituées aient été plus nombreuses au Québec que dans aucune autre province du Canada.

Ces exemples suffisent pour donner une idée du travail de démystification entrepris par Andrée Lévesque. L'on peut regretter qu'elle se soit sentie obligée de circonscrire ses aspirations originelles qui devaient porter sur tous les aspects de la vie des femmes. Il faut en même temps la féliciter d'avoir mené à bien la tranche qu'elle nous propose dans ce livre écrit d'une plume alerte et agréable. Petit à petit, grâce à de telles chercheuses féministes, la véritable histoire des femmes commence à voir le jour.

Mair Verthuy

Joan Sherwood, *Poverty in Eighteenth Century Spain: The Women and Children of the Inclusa*. University of Toronto Press, 1988.

Joan Sherwood's excellent study of the *Inclusa* (a foundling hospital in 18th century Madrid) sheds new light on the plight of the poor, and especially the children of the poor. It also illuminates areas of conflict between the old christian view of poverty as a permanent social feature and the new "enlightenment" view (held by some doctors and officials of the *Inclusa*) that poverty could be abolished.

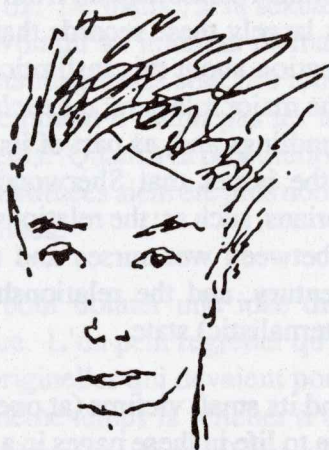
The unbroken records of the *Inclusa* extend from 1572, the date of its founding, into the 20th century. It is largely these records that Sherwood has mined for the fascinating cache of information about this institution and its unfortunate inmates. Women and children play the major role here; the *Inclusa* was, after all, an institution dedicated to the care of foundlings and, as part of its staff, included large numbers of wet-nurses. Many of the issues that Sherwood discusses are of concern to feminists and feminist historians, such as: the relationship between mothers and their children, the relationship between wet-nurses and their charges, the increase in illegitimacy in the 18th century, and the relationship between the poor and the patriarchal (but at times paternalistic) state.

The *Inclusa*, its staff, and its small victims (at one point the mortality rate of the foundlings was 100%) come to life in these pages in a welter of carefully researched and colourful detail. We learn, for example, that 18th Century Madrid was the dirtiest capital in Europe, a fact which no doubt contributed to the appalling death rate at the *Inclusa*. The section on the *expósito* as patient is a horrifying account of 18th Century medical practices. The callousness with which these infants were treated raises the question of the foundling hospital as a socially accepted form of infanticide.

While I wish that she had focused a bit more on the conflicts between the doctors and the *Junta de damas*, who ran the *Inclusa* at the end of the 18th century, and on

the conflicts between old regime charity and "enlightened" attempts to improve the situation of the infants, this gap may be due to lack of sources rather than an oversight. In any case, this is a very valuable book for anyone interested in the treatment of the poor in the 18th Century and the problematics of infanticide, medicine, and the institutions of this period. It also provides a useful comparison to studies dealing with similar issues in other European countries.

Rosemarie Schade



she blew the wind
away —

Martine Ross, *Le Prix à payer pour être mère*. Les éditions du remue-ménage, 1983.

La grossesse idéale, l'accouchement parfait, cela vous dit quelque chose? On vous en a sûrement parler. On vous a sûrement dit ce qu'il fallait faire pour y arriver. Et si malheureusement vous ne vivez pas votre grossesse et votre accouchement comme la plus belle expérience de votre vie, et bien tant pis, il vous faudra le cacher, ne pas montrer que vous êtes déçue.

Vous êtes fatiguée? Souriez. Votre mari et même votre médecin se moquent de vos peurs: peur de la dépression post-partum, peur face aux changements qu'entraîne la grossesse? Souriez. Votre médecin décide de vous faire une épisiotomie alors que vous lui aviez clairement fait comprendre que vous n'en vouliez pas? Souriez. Et surtout ne montrez pas que vous avez des limites. Ne montrez pas que votre corps n'en peut plus. Ne montrez pas que votre moral est sur le point de flancher . . . Souriez.

Voilà ce que Martine Ross essaie de dénoncer dans son livre *Le prix à payer pour être mère*.

Tous les chapitres de son livre commencent par des 'Si': Si les femmes pouvaient parler; si les femmes possédaient leur corps; si les hommes avaient les enfants; si la famille aidait la mère; si les femmes haïssaient les enfants; si la société respectait les femmes. Souhait de voir les femmes bien vivre leur maternité comme et quand elles le désirent sans se faire imposer de maternité idéale, mais aussi conditions essentielles à la réalisation de ce rêve.

Si vous aussi rêvez d'un univers où il est permis de douter et d'avoir peur, de vouloir ou de ne pas vouloir d'enfant, et d'être respectée dans ses choix, vous aurez plaisir à lire le livre de Martine Ross. Bien qu'écrit en 1983, ce livre est encore d'actualité: si peu de choses ont changé . . .

Pour terminer, je vous laisse sur ces quelques mots de Martine Ross. "De toute façon, il n'y a plus rien à perdre à tout remettre en question, puisque la dénatalité est là à cause de l'écoeurement individuel, à cause de la maladie physique et mentale. Cela coûte cher à la société de ne viser que la quantité!"

Etre mère, oui, mais pas à n'importe quel prix.

Di-Anne Robin



Margaret Laurence, *Dance on The Earth*. McClelland and Stewart, 1989.

What do war and motherhood have in common? Nothing, Margaret Laurence would like to think. She opens her memoir by rejecting as obscene the notion that these are the ultimate experiences for men and women, respectively.

It's an apt beginning for a book unified by a voice which celebrates life, and women. Whether mourning or rejoicing (and the two draw closer as we age), Laurence cherishes "the life dance of pain and love," and gives thanks for it.

Laurence died from cancer at sixty (January 5, 1987). This author of fifteen books, four of them for children, is considered by many to be Canada's foremost novelist, yet her painful shyness and sensitivity and, latterly, her health prevented her from actively promoting her work. Her Manawaka series of five connected fictions stands as a gigantic accomplishment which continues to earn recognition at home and abroad.

Dance on the Earth was written in 1986 while Laurence was dying. It was transcribed and typed by her friend Joan Johnston, without whose generous aid the memoir might not have been completed. Comically, earlier efforts to write an autobiography had bogged down in boredom: "I knew what was going to happen next. There was none of the mysterious excitement that one feels in writing a novel."

The structure of *Dance* reflects Laurence's modesty, and the enormous part which women played in her life. She has shaped her personal story into sections named for the women whose influence was greatest: Verna Simpson Wemyss, her natural mother; Margaret Simpson Wemyss, her mother's sister and her step-mother; Elsie Fry Laurence, her mother-in-law; and Margaret Wemyss Laurence (sub-titled simply "Margaret"), a section covering her life as wife, mother and writer. She

married Jack Laurence when she was twenty-one, just after graduating from university.

Laurence called the angry and sometimes depressed part of herself "the Black Celt," after the Scottish ancestors who meant so much to her. She also called herself "a natural-born reformer," not a revolutionary. There was and is no shortage on things in need of reform, or of the kind of situations which prompted her righteous wrath.

Laurence was not an angry woman in the usual sense of that term, since love and compassion formed her habitual state of mind, but rage she could and did (like the Old Testament prophets) against war, injustice, pollution and the mis-treatment of women. These themes give the book its didactic tone. The seeing eye is inescapably female. She says, rather touchingly, that she writes "as a child and as a mother." And as a reformer, one hastens to add. A prophet.

Verna died when Margaret was four. This strong but gentle woman reminds Margaret of her hatred of "the men who make wars, . . . the old military men who talk of 'megadeaths' and 'acceptable losses.' I hate them with all my heart and soul and voice." Verna's talent as a musician prompts a reflection on women who are forced to deny their creativity for the sake of their families: "I confess I wonder how gifted women who were silenced managed not to go mad."

"Marg," Verna's older sister, stepped in to care for the child in the crisis created by Verna's death, and married Robert Wemyss one year later, "a marriage of comrades." She rapidly became "Mum" to Laurence, who credits her with encouragement in her writing, and with the gift of emotional stability: "Frankly, given all the deaths in the family, I think it is a miracle I'm as steady as I am." Her step-mother had graduated from high school as the top student in all of Manitoba that year, yet had been denied university by her father because of her gender.

The section on Elsie is brief but intriguing. Elsie went to Russia before marrying John Laurence, and wrote and published several novels, handicapped (a theme one

can expect in *Dance*) by being a woman. Seven children are a solid impediment to creating anything other than the next meal and a line of clean washing. She served as a role model to Laurence and a source of support for many years.

Laurence steps lightly over her relation to Jack Laurence. It is clear that they were deeply in love for at least a decade, and that their separation in 1962 stemmed from his failure to understand what writing meant to her: "My mother-in-law was probably the only person in either family who truly understood what I was experiencing and who gave me her total support and love. She knew how much I cared about Jack and our children, but she, and she alone, knew too how much I had to follow, with doubt and guilt, but with certainty, the vocation that had been given me."

Laurence's story of her years alone in London reveals her courage and determination. Her children were seven and ten, and Laurence was terrified, financially and emotionally. Could she care for Jocelyn and David, earn a living with only a little help from Jack, and do her writing? Would the children be emotionally damaged? "I can never be that frightened again," she writes, adding that it was the children who kept her going and lent her strength she never knew she had, strength probably given "by all my mothers."

Curiously, the irony that her difficulties became her strength finds a psychological parallel in the situation of the early Scottish settlers in Manitoba. Laurence notes in *Heart of a Stranger* (1978) that the hardships encountered by these pioneers distracted them from the inner terrors evoked by their chieftains' betrayal: "What appeared to be their greatest trouble in a new land—the grappling with an unyielding environment—was in fact probably their salvation. I believe they survived not in spite of the physical hardships but because of them, for all their attention and thought had to be focused outward. They could not brood." Thus Laurence and the children, who had been born in Somaliland and Ghana, survived in England in the 1960s, the period of her greatest creativity.

Dance on the Earth is a moving story of one woman's life and of the support which women provide to one another. It is not "great literature" in the sense that

one applies that term, quite properly, to her fiction. It is, however, a great human document, a testimony to the human spirit and the creative impulse. The "dance" will go on as long as there are such dancers.

Patricia Morley



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Le Bulletin/Newsletter
Institute Simone de Beauvoir

Susann Collin's article, "La Femme Grandiose: Our Right to Shape our Own Bodies," sparked empathetic but uneasy reactions in me. Having had anorexia and bulimia myself, I agree for the most part with Collin's article, but I feel that she did not completely explore the roots of wimmin's eating disorders. Collin mentions how society systematically objectifies wimmin, but refrains from naming or analyzing what kind of society that is. Many articles similarly place too much attention on the immediate pressures activating wimmin's obsession with their bodies, and ignore the underlying maledefined structure that fuels these social pressures: our patriarchal system.

Even most therapy groups focus solely on wimmin accepting their bodies, and learning to love themselves. In essence, they teach wimmin how to cope with the destructive negative images of wimmin hurled at us daily, but do little to change how patriarchy dictates all that woman is physically, mentally, emotionally, and sexually. Such patriarchal ideals as compulsory heterosexuality and beauty, among others, victimize wimmin from childhood. Yet once again only wimmin must build up defences, and survival mechanisms. The load rests on us, while our male oppressors stand unblemished, profiting from a world that creates solidarity among men by dominating and exploiting wimmin.

Certainly, when millions of wimmin suffer (and many die) from eating disorders such as dieting, compulsive overeating, anorexia and bulimia, political action must be taken. By not naming, describing, or analyzing the basic skeletal structure that generates the seeds of wimmin's self-hatred (and wimmin hatred), we keep the burden personal and not political. It's time for wimmin to unload their shoulders.

Patrizia Tavormina

News of the Institute

Our New Visiting Professor

Dr. Sherene Razack became Visiting Professor of Women's Studies at the SdeB Institute in August, 1989. Originally from Trinidad, she studied history at the University of British Columbia (B.A), the University of Ottawa (M.A) and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (Ph. D).

Professor Razack brings an impressive array of interests and expertise to the Institute. She worked for over ten years on human rights education and activism with trade unions and community groups. She also developed curriculum and taught at the Summer College for Human Rights Activists, which is held annually at the University of Ottawa. In her doctoral dissertation, Dr. Razack investigated the potential for women of improving their status through the application of feminism to legal issues.

This year Professor Razack is teaching Women's Identity and Image, Feminist Theory, and Feminism Applied to Law. She is also co-ordinating and participating in a series of workshops on non-racist theory and teaching, entitled "Women, Race and Sex Oppression."

Professor Mair Verthuy has returned from sabbatical leave. During her year away, she attended two very exciting conferences (one in Brussels, on Women's Studies in Europe; one in Dakar, on African literature) and finished her manuscript on Hélène Parmelin, for which she received a publication grant from the Aid to Scholarly Publications Programme of the Humanities Federation. She published three books: *Jeanne Hyvrard* with Jennifer Waelti-Walters (Rodopi, Amsterdam), which was awarded Le Prix de l'APFUCC; *L'espace-temps dans la littérature* (APFUCC, Victoria), the proceedings of a workshop organized by Verthuy; and *Toute écriture est amour* (VLB, Montréal), a collection of essays by Madeleine Gagnon, selected and introduced by Verthuy and Jeanne Maranda.

Dr. Kumud Sharma, Visiting Scholar of the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute, has just spent four months as Adjunct Fellow at the SdeB Institute. She is Senior Fellow and Deputy Director of the Centre for Women's Development Studies in New Delhi. Her research interests include women and development with particular reference to rural and tribal women.

Dr. Maria Suarez Lafuente and Dr. Isabel Carrera Suarez (both from Universidad de Oviedo, in Spain) spent two weeks at the Institute. On September 28, they gave an open seminar, at which Lafuente spoke on "Contemporary Spanish Women Writers" and Suarez spoke on "Short stories in English by Women Writers."

Dr. Jo Vellacott and Dr. Patricia Morley have been appointed life-time Honorary Fellows of the Institute.

Dr. Rosemarie Schade, who became a Fellow of the Institute in May, 1989, teaches a survey of European Women's History and an upper-level seminar on the history of women from 1785 to the present. Her current research concerns the *Bund deutscher Frauenvereine*, the German middle class women's movement.

Dr. Heather Jon Maroney, Adjunct Fellow, has taken up an appointment as Assistant Professor in the Institute of Women's Studies and Sociology/Anthropology Department at Carleton University.

Dr. Berkeley Kaite, who became an Adjunct Fellow in 1988, is a Lecturer at Carleton University. She has a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council post-doctoral fellowship for 1988-1990. Her research interests include: sexual difference and the representation; the diachrony of the fetish; mass media and feminine discursive space.

Dr. Marianne Ainley, Adjunct Fellow, has edited *Despite the Odds: Essays on Canadian Women in Science* (Véhicule Press). The book includes contributions by Dr. Rose Sheinin (Academic Vice-Rector of Concordia), Dr. Kailash Anand and Dr. Susan Hoecker-Drysdale (Fellows), Dr. Barbara Meadowcroft (Adjunct Fellow) and

three of Dr. Ainley's former students: Louise Lafortune, Janice Beaveridge, and Gillian Kranias.

Nilima Mandal Giri became an Adjunct Fellow in September, 1989. She received her M.A. in Bengali Language and Literature from Jadavpur University, in 1960, and her M.Ed. from Cornell University, in 1964. Nilima, who came to Montreal in 1964, has two grown up children. She is currently working on the development of women's education in India from a historical perspective.

Dyana Werden, a graduate student in the Special Individual Programme, is writing her thesis on "Women's Language: an image/word conjunction." A practising artist, she has taught art in schools, community centres, and colleges for over twenty years. Her paintings and sculpture have been seen in many group shows and in solo exhibitions in Halifax, Montreal and Toronto. *Why*, a large, seven-panel work (canvas, lead, and acrylic on plywood) is now traveling with an international exhibition, entitled, "Fear of Others: La peur de l'autre—in search of tolerance, art against racism."

Penny Cadrain, winner of the Mair Verthuy Scholarship, was honoured at the Institute Christmas party on December 1st, 1989.

Feminist Methodology Course

This term a new course in feminist methodology is being taught at the Institute. The course, developed and taught by Martha Saunders, is entitled Feminist Studies: Politics and Methods. In addition to critiquing malestream methodologies in the humanities and social sciences, the course examines possible methods of illuminating the complexities of race and class relations between women.

The *Bulletin* is, therefore, featuring articles and reviews on feminist theory and methodology in the Views and Reviews section.

Lecture Series

The Institute is presenting a series of lectures in the 1989-90 session, at the Concordia Faculty Club, entitled "Environmental Issues: Feminist Perspectives." On October 10, Gudny Gudmundsdottir of the Icelandic Women's Alliance spoke on "A Valuable Future on a Healthy Earth." She also visited the Institute and talked informally about the policies of the Women's Alliance, the first female political party to hold the balance of power in a parliamentary system.

On November 6, Dr. Kumud Sharma, visiting Adjunct Fellow, delivered the second lecture, "Women and the Diminishing Forest: Struggle for Survival and Change."

A third lecture by Patricia Hynes, author of *The Recurring Silent Spring*, will be given next term, at a date to be announced.

"What did you do during your sabbatical, Arpi?"

This is the question you asked me. Well, let me see if I can give you a quick overview of some of the activities that may be of interest to you as members of the Institute. But first of all, I would like to say that I enjoyed my sabbatical, knowing that the Institute business was in responsible hands with Elizabeth Henrik as Acting Principal. So a sincere thank you to Elizabeth. Another important discovery for me was the Documentation Centre at the Institute. I had used the Centre occasionally for finding a reference or two, but I had never found time to work there since January 1986. Finally, I could afford this luxury. I was so impressed with the richness of material available and the ease of access provided by Joan Kohner's good organization! This is where I wrote most of the papers I prepared in the area of Women's Studies.

I worked on a book length manuscript on *Immigrants and Minorities* and did some practical work in this area. I was an invited speaker at a conference on *Ukrainian Women: Tradition and Change: Exploring the Themes of Feminism and*

Ethnicity (Toronto, October 28 to 30, 1988). I conducted an afternoon workshop on "Strategies for Setting Goals and Making Structures Responsive" at the *United Council of Filipino Association's National Conference*, (Montreal, October 9, 1988). I chaired a round table: "Féminisme et nationalisme: de la libération des peuples à la libération des femmes," in the context of the International Colloquium on *La Longue Marche des Femmes Afro-Asiatiques vers l'Égalité: Bilan et Perspectives*," organized by Le Centre Maghrébin de Recherche et d'information in collaboration with La 3ième Foire Internationale du Livre Féministe et le Groupe Interdisciplinaire d'Enseignement et de Recherche Féministe (GIERF) (UQAM, June 17 to 18, 1988).

During my sabbatical I synthesized and reviewed my research in the area of Women, Education and Development. Three papers were completed and presented: "Women, Education and Development" (November 17, 1988), as part of Trent University's 1988-89 *Feminist Issues Speakers Series*; "Les femmes et l'éducation en milieu rural," an invited paper presented at the international colloquium on *Les réalités socio-économiques de la femme africaine* (Laval University, September 30 to October 2, 1988); "Development: Our Common Quest/Développement: Notre quête commune," *Keynote Address opening the 12th annual conference of CRIAW/ICREF* (Laval University, November 11 to 13, 1988).

In relation to my work on Women and Education, I visited the Women's Research and Documentation Group at the University of Dar es Salaam and had several meetings to plan exchanges and collaboration opportunities with the Institute. I also visited a similar group, which is being formed at the Sokoine Agricultural University.

Since October 1988, I had been working on the adaptation to developing countries of an extension education training module, which was developed by a North Carolina State University Team, headed by Dr. Edgar Boone. I completed this project, translated the adapted format into French and tested it in a training session in the Shaba Province of Zaire. This was a very interesting project since it was the first time in Shaba that the training was conducted in an integrated group of male and female extension agents. The best news is that a female extension agent

Concordia University has become an educational institutional member of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women.

Congratulations and many thanks to Dr. Patrick Kenniff, Rector and Vice-Chancellor and to Dr. Rose Sheinin, Vice-Rector Academic.

We're Worth More!

- The federal government spent \$11 billion on the military and \$11 million on women's equality. That's 1,000 times more.
- Last year's federal budget cut 15% from the Secretary of State Women's Program, a major funding source for women's groups across the country. This cut affects us all.
- We are worth more than that! Lots of work remains to be done in our fight for equality and social justice. Let's challenge the government. Let's ask them, where's their commitment to women's equality?

For more information write: Brian Mulroney, House of Commons, Ottawa, Canada

And join in your local International Women's Day celebrations and find out what we can do together.

Sponsored by National Action Committee on the Status of Women, National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada, National Council of Women

Call For Papers

This is the last call for papers for a *Festschrift* volume to mark the work of Jo Vellacott at the Institute. We are therefore asking for paper submissions related to research and teaching in Women's Studies with special emphasis on *Women and Peace: Feminist Perspectives*.

L'Institut Simone de Beauvoir a l'intention de publier un volume dédié à Jo Vellacott au début de mai 1990. Aussi, nous vous demandons votre collaboration et aimerions que vous nous soumettiez votre essai relié à la recherche et à l'enseignement relatifs aux femmes. Nous privilégierons les essais qui traiteront des *Femmes et de la Paix: perspectives féministes*.

Deadline for receiving the completed manuscripts: March 30, 1990.

Date limite pour soumettre les travaux: 30 mars, 1990.

Please send your submission to:/Faites parvenir vous manuscripts à:

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